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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 003357

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

PARIS FOR UNESCO
STATE FOR IO/EDA SURA JOHNSON
USDA/FAS LYNN REICH, DICK HUGHES

FROM FODAG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AORC](#) [KUNR](#) [FAO](#) [KUNR](#) [AORC](#) [FAO](#)

SUBJECT: EU TAKES ON TERM LIMITS FOR FAO

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1. (SBU) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST. THE EU PRESIDENCY HAS BEEN GIVEN A MANDATE IN ROME TO SEEK SUPPORT AMONG ALL REGIONAL GROUPS FOR A PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE FAO BASIC TEXTS TO REINSTITUTE DIRECTOR GENERAL TERM LIMITS. THE EU INITIATIVE STRENGTHENS THE EXISTING GENEVA GROUP DECISION TO TAKE UP THE ISSUE THIS YEAR. DEPARTMENT VIEWS ON THE LENGTH OF TERM (FOUR OR SIX YEARS) REQUESTED. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) MISOFF ATTENDED A MEETING JULY 5 HOSTED BY THE CURRENT EU PRESIDENT, DENMARK, TO DISCUSS A STRATEGY FOR REINSTATING DIRECTOR GENERAL (DG) TERM LIMITS AT THE UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO). SPAIN, FRANCE, PORTUGAL (CURRENT CHAIR OF THE FAO EUROPEAN REGIONAL GROUP), CANADA, AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND (REPRESENTING THE FAO'S SOUTHWEST PACIFIC GROUP) AND JAPAN ALSO ATTENDED. DANISH MINISTER COUNSELLOR JORGEN PEDERSON REPORTED THAT TERM LIMITS HAS BEEN AGREED EU POLICY SINCE 1998, BUT THAT DENMARK WAS GIVEN A MANDATE LAST DECEMBER TO TAKE IT UP IN ROME AFTER THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT:FIVE YEARS LATER MEETING (WFS5YL).

PROPOSED EU STRATEGY

3. (SBU) JORGEN OUTLINED THE FOLLOWING PROPOSED STRATEGY:

-- THE EU PRESIDENCY WILL HOLD MEETINGS WITH ALL REGIONAL GROUPS BEFORE AUGUST, CIRCULATING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETINGS A "SPEAKING NOTE" (FAXED TO IO/EDA SURA JOHNSON 7/8/02) WHICH EXPLAINS THE RATIONALE FOR SEEKING TERM LIMITS.

-- (END OF SEPTEMBER) AN EU-DRAFTED REQUEST TO THE FAO TO
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ADD THE AGENDA ITEM TO THE OCTOBER COUNCIL SESSION GOES FORWARD. IDEALLY THE REQUEST WOULD BE SIGNED BY CHAIRS OF ALL REGIONAL GROUPS; ABSENT THIS, THE REQUEST SHOULD HAVE A LARGE NUMBER OF SIGNATURES FROM MANY REGIONS.

-- (OCTOBER 2002) THE FAO COUNCIL (OCTOBER 28-NOV 2) AGREES TO ADOPT THE AGENDA WITH THE ADDITIONAL ITEM (MAJORITY VOTE, IF A VOTE IS TAKEN). (NOTE: THIS IS WHERE THE TERM LIMITS MOVEMENT CAME TO AN INGLORIOUS END IN 1999 WHEN THE COUNCIL VOTED DOWN THE PROPOSAL TO ADD THE ITEM TO THE AGENDA).

-- THE COUNCIL DEBATES THE SUBJECT (PROBABLY WITHOUT CONCLUSION) AND AGREES TO SEND IT FORWARD TO THE JUNE 23-28, 2003 COUNCIL SESSION.

-- (JUNE 2003) THE 124TH COUNCIL SESSION AGREES ON CHANGES TO THE FAO BASIC TEXTS TO REINSTATE TERM LIMITS AND SENDS THE PROPOSAL TO THE FAO CONFERENCE (NOVEMBER 26-28, 2003) FOR ADOPTION.

-- (NOVEMBER 2003) THE CONFERENCE ADOPTS THE PROPOSALS. (ALL PROPOSALS TO CHANGE BASIC TEXTS MUST BE ADOPTED BY 2/3 VOTE).

WHAT KIND OF "TERM LIMITS"

14. (SUB) UNGA RESOLUTION 51/241 (ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY) AFFIRMS THAT "UNIFORM TERMS OF FOUR YEARS, RENEWABLE ONCE" SHOULD BE INTRODUCED FOR UN PROGRAMS FUNDS AND OTHER ECOSOC BODIES. THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES ARE ALSO "ENCOURAGED" TO
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CONSIDER UNIFORM TERMS AND TERM LIMITS.

15. (SBU) ON THIS BASIS, PEDERSON ARGUED THAT - IDEALLY - THE TERM LIMITS CAMPAIGN WOULD SEEK TO AMEND THE FAO BASIC TEXTS TO ALLOW FOR TWO FOUR-YEAR TERMS. (THE CURRENT TERM LENGTH IS SIX YEARS). NONETHELESS, BEARING IN MIND THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE WAS TO LIMIT THE TERMS (WHATEVER

LENGTH), THE EU WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS 4 OR 6 YEAR TERMS (FIVE YEARS IS PROBABLY NOT AN OPTION AS THE FAO CONFERENCE CYCLE -- WHERE ELECTIONS ARE HELD -- IS EVERY TWO YEARS). OTHER MEETING PARTICIPANTS DID NOT HAVE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ON THE LENGTH OF TERM AND AGREED THAT THE VIEWS OF OTHER REGIONAL GROUPS SHOULD BE HEARD ON THE SUBJECT.

16. (SBU) THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF "GRANDFATHERING" THE CURRENT DG (I.E. TO EXEMPT HIM FROM TERM LIMITS ALL TOGETHER). IT WAS NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT IF A FOUR-YEAR TERM WERE TO BE APPROVED, THE DG WOULD MOST LIKELY BE ENTITLED TO STAY UNTIL THE END OF HIS SIX-YEAR TERM IN 2005.

VIEWS OF REGIONAL GROUPS

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ACTION IO-00

INFO LOG-00 AGRE-00 AID-00 EUR-00 UTED-00 FDRE-01 TEDE-00
OIC-02 TEST-00 SAS-00 /003W
-----C99589 110813Z /75

R 091156Z JUL 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4705
INFO USDA FAS WASHDC 2212
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USEU BRUSSELS 2730

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15. (SBU) FODAG MISOFF, CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ALL STATED THAT SEEKING A TWO TERM-LIMIT WAS ALREADY AN AGREED GENEVA GROUP POSITION AND THAT THE ISSUE MUST BE PURSUED NOW IN ORDER TO BE APPROVED AT THE 2003 CONFERENCE. (LEAVING THE ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED AT THE 2005 CONFERENCE WOULD PUT THE REFORM EFFORT IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH A (POSSIBLE) RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN BY THE CURRENT DIRECTOR GENERAL). AS STATED IN PARA FOUR, MEETING PARTICIPANTS DID NOT HAVE A POSITION ON TERM LENGTH, BUT AGREED TO SEEK INSTRUCTIONS. NEW ZEALAND RECALLED THAT A SIMILAR EFFORT AT UNESCO HAD TAKEN 18 MONTHS AND EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF STICKING TO THE COURSE ONCE THE DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN TO MOVE FORWARD ON TERM LIMITS.

16. (SBU) IT WAS NOTED THAT MOST MEMBERS OF THE FAO'S LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC) SUPPORTED TERM LIMITS. (COMMENT: WHILE THERE IS NO FORMAL SYSTEM OF ROTATION AT THE FAO, THE GRULAC HAS NEVER HAD A DIRECTOR GENERAL AND BELIEVES THAT IT IS THEIR TURN. END COMMENT.) INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE AFRICAN AND ASIAN GROUPS HAD BEEN HEARD TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT OF TERM LIMITS BUT THE STRENGTH OF THIS POSITION THROUGHOUT THE GROUP NEEDS TO BE DISCUSSED AND EXPLORED.

NEXT STEPS

17. (SBU) IT WAS AGREED THAT DENMARK WOULD REPORT BACK ON ITS MEETINGS WITH THE OTHER REGIONAL GROUPS.

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18. (SBU) MEETING PARTICIPANTS ALSO DISCUSSED WAYS TO INVOLVE AMBASSADOR MEKOUR (MOROCCO), THE FAO INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF COUNCIL, NOTING THAT HAVING MEKOUR ON BOARD WAS IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESS OF THE REFORM EFFORT. (COMMENT: SINCE MEKOUR IS NOW STATIONED IN WASHINGTON, THIS POSES LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS. WHETHER MEKOUR WILL SUPPORT THE REFORM EFFORT IS ALSO NOT KNOWN. END COMMENT). AS A (LESS SATISFACTORY) FALLBACK, MEETING PARTICIPANTS DISCUSSED

EMBARKING ON INFORMAL, INTER-REGIONAL LUNCHES TO DISCUSS THE
MATTER WITH OTHER ROME COLLEAGUES.

19. (SBU) MISOFF PROPOSED, AND OTHER MEMBERS AGREED THAT A
DEMARCHÉ IN CAPITALS (POSSIBLY A JOINT DEMARCHÉ) TO COUNCIL
MEMBERS ON THE QUESTION OF PUTTING THE ITEM ON THE FAO
COUNCIL AGENDA WOULD BE STRONGLY ADVISED. THIS SHOULD BE
TAKEN UP IN EARLY SEPTEMBER AFTER THE MEETINGS WITH THE
REGIONAL GROUPS.

WHO WILL BELL THE CAT?

110. (SBU) PEDERSON REPORTED THAT THE MATTER HAD NOT YET
BEEN RAISED WITH DIOUF (AS THEY DID NOT WANT HIM TO USE THE
WFS5YL TO LOBBY AGAINST THE IDEA). IT WAS NOTED THAT, WHEN
THE ISSUE HAD BEEN RAISED IN THE PAST, DIOUF'S RESPONSE WAS
INEVITABLY "IT'S UP TO MEMBERSHIP" -- DESPITE THE FACT THAT
HE VERY MUCH MADE IT HIS BUSINESS TO DEFEAT THE 1999 EFFORT
TO ADD TERM LIMITS TO THE FAO COUNCIL AGENDA.

COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST
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11. (SBU) THE EU INITIATIVE BROADENS AND STRENGTHENS AN
EXISTING GENEVA GROUP DECISION THAT THE TERM LIMITS SHOULD
BE SOUGHT, AND THAT THE PROCESS NEEDED TO START IN 2002 IN
ORDER TO AVOID CONFLICT WITH THE NEXT ELECTION (IN 2005).

12. (SBU) AMONG OTHER "REFORM-MINDED" DELEGATES, FOUR YEARS
IS THE STARTING OUT POSITION, BUT THERE IS PROBABLY SOME
NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY ON THE ISSUE. DEPARTMENT VIEWS ON
THE LENGTH OF TERM REQUESTED. HEILEMAN

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